the astrolabe for ordinary nautical use. It was by the means of this instrument that he ascertained the latitude by solar observation on the Coast of Guinea, whither he was sent on a scientific mission by the Bang. On his return he reported the results of his observations at Court, on March llth, 1495. Among those present on this occasion was Christopher Columbus, who did not fail to take careful note and to record the event in one of his characteristic observations.

The Forced Conversion of the Jews in Portugal in 1497—one of the most shameful episodes in the history of the Middle Ages—could not, of course, affect their scientific interests. Abraham Zacuto (as we have seen) went into exile. Joseph Vecinho was compelled to submit to baptism, and, under the name Diego Mendes Vecinho, was prominent in scientific work at the Court of King Manoel the Fortunate. None the less, Jewish loyalty remained strong in his descendants, and a century later one finds them settled in Italy as professing Jews, still maintaining, however, their ancestor's scientific bent.

Another victim of the forced conversions was Pedro Nuiies, who, a mere child at the time, subsequently became Professor of Mathematics at Coimbra and chief cosmographer to the Crown of Portugal. He, too, remained closely attached to Judaism in secret; so much so, that at the beginning of the seventeenth century (as we are informed in a document recently discovered) his grandsons were tried by the

Inquisition for "Judaising". His *magnum opus* was the Treatise on the Sphere (first published at Lisbon in 1537), described as "one of the scientific glories of Portugal", which opened the way for Mercator's work and thus for the whole system of modern cartography. The late King Manoel of Portugal, in his *Early Portuguese Books,* had no hesitation in calling this Marrano scientist (whose Jewish